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13 September 2003

RUS41962.E

Russia: Whether there exists a central computer system or database containing residency registration information of Russian citizens

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board, Ottawa

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), registration information for permanent or sojourn residency is stamped on page 5 of the Russian Federation internal passport or page 14 of the Soviet internal passport, which also records the person's federal region of residence, his or her home address and the date of registration (Jan. 2002, 19). Two other sources also refer to the placement of a registration stamp in the internal passport (NYULR Apr. 2001, 345; EPIC/PI 2003). There is no central database for internal passports according to a 2002 report (*Miami Herald* 24 Mar. 2002).

The Research Directorate found no mention of a central registration computerized database among the sources consulted, which included a detailed report on residence registration published in 2001 and a 2003 survey of privacy rights in Russia (NYULR Apr. 2001; EPIC/PI 2003). Both the *Miami Herald* and *The St. Petersburg Times* suggest that local police stations maintain records on residency (*The Miami Herald* 24 Mar. 2002; *The St. Petersburg Times* 8 Aug. 2003). The *Miami Herald* reported the difficulty of obtaining replacement passports in Moscow and that one individual faced a situation where his passports records were destroyed when the building formerly housing the local police detachment was torn down (24 Mar. 2002). *The St. Petersburg Times* made passing mention of an "official database" containing residency information that was to verify nominees' candidacy applications in a recent St. Petersburg election (8 Aug. 2003).

Observations made by the Electronic Privacy Information Center and Privacy International (EPIC/PI) suggest the existence of one or more residency registration databases while noting that personal information is available for a price "especially in Moscow and St. Petersburg" where the

illegal collection and distribution of data on private persons and organizations is quite commonplace. Quite popular are databases on purchase/sale of cars, car owners, passport data and foreign passport data of Russian citizens, data on real estate (purchase and sale of apartments, their parameters, location and proprietors), databases of taxpayers, information about people wanted for crimes and those who have been previously convicted. CDs with such databases are easily available on the streets and the Internet. The CD can cost from USD10 to USD1,500 depending on the subject, amount and accuracy of the data (2003).

Detailed information concerning the new system of residency registration (*propiska*) in the Russian Federation as it is applied was the subject of RUS41401.E of 24 March 2003. In addition, please consult RUS21431.E of 25 July 1995.

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please find below the list of additional sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

References

Electronic Privacy Information Center and Privacy International (EPIC/PI). 2003. "Russian Federation." *Privacy and Human Rights 2003: An International Survey of Privacy Laws and Developments*. Edited by Cedric Laurant. <<http://pi.greennet.org.uk/survey/phr2003/countries/russianfederation.htm>> [Accessed 9 Sept. 2003]

Miami Herald. 24 March 2002. Sarah Karush. "Russian Passports Vital, Those Without Them Find." (Johnson's Russia List No. 6154). <<http://www.cdi.org/Russia/Johnson/6154-5.cfm>> [Accessed 9 Sept. 2003]

New York University Law Review (NYULR). April 2001. Vol. 76, No. 344. Damian S. Schaible. "Life in Russia's 'Closed City': Moscow's Movement Restrictions and the Rule of Law."
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St. Petersburg Times. 8 August 2003. No. 891. Vladimir Kovalev. "11 Candidates to Run for Governor."
<http://www.sptimesrussia.com/archive/times/891/top/t_10030.htm> [Accessed 9 Sept. 2003]

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). January 2002. "UNHCR Paper on Asylum Seekers from the Russian Federation in the Context of the Situation in Chechnya." (Global IDP Project 31 Jan. 2002)
<[http://www.db.idpproject.org/Sites/idpSurvey.nsf/47DB5D8D73945008C1256B7B0054E4BF/\\$file/hcr-chya-0102.pdf](http://www.db.idpproject.org/Sites/idpSurvey.nsf/47DB5D8D73945008C1256B7B0054E4BF/$file/hcr-chya-0102.pdf)> [Accessed 9 Sept. 2003]

Additional Sources Consulted

Internet sites, including:

ACCORD/UNHCR, 8th European Country of Origin Information Seminar

Access Democracy

Asylum Law

Central Electoral Commission, Russian Federation

Council of Europe

European Country of Origin Information Network

European Union

IDP Project

Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND)

Johnson's Russia List

The Moscow Times

Nelegal.net

Open Society Institute

Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL)

Travel Documents

Visa Reciprocity and Country Document Finder

World News Connection

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